

#### WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method for the detection of dormant cryptobiotic microbes comprising:
  - a. exciting the intrinsic dormant cryptobiotic microbial chromophore with a specific range of electromagnetic radiation wavelength between 610 nm and 680 nm; whereby said microbes containing intrinsic chromophores are excited to emit electromagnetic radiation; and
  - b. detecting the emitted electromagnetic radiation signals from the excited microbial chromophores in the 710 nm to 860 nm range.
2. A method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said microbe chromophores are selected from the group consisting of alkali earth metal-pyridine dicarboxylic acid salts.
3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the dormant cryptobiotic microbes to be detected include bacterial endospores, fungal spores, and protozoa oocysts.